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RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 0399
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA 2063
RUEHMT/AMCONSUL MONTREAL 0406
RUEHQU/AMCONSUL QUEBEC 1435
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 PORT AU PRINCE 000589

SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/19/2019

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SUBJECT: HAITI SENATE ELECTIONS: TEPID CAMPAIGNING, SOME
VIOLENCE

PORT AU PR 00000589 001.2 OF 003

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires a.i. Thomas C. Tighe. Reason: E.O. 1
2958 1.4 (b), (d)

Summary

1. (SBU) Campaigning in the lead-up to the June 21 second round of voting in Haiti's partial Senate elections has been lukewarm, as candidates lack money and voters remain apathetic. Four days before the vote, the government announced state campaign financing for candidates -- too late to revive the campaign. Clashes between supporters of opposing candidates have been isolated but have resulted in two deaths. Haitian and MINUSTAH police are already deploying to problem areas. The police announced election day security measures that should deter violence while enabling a larger turnout. Haiti's electoral authority continues to stumble in logistical preparations for election day. The President and Prime Minister have remained completely silent on the election. No members of the government have urged citizens to get out and vote. The credibility of the election will hinge on minimizing violence, increasing turnout, and identifying and prosecuting those responsible for fraud. End summary.

Lukewarm Campaign

2. (SBU) Campaigning for the second round of partial Senate election has been low key compared to the first round, when a large field of candidates slugged it out in public rallies, poster wars, and radio and TV debates. Lack of funds is one reason. The Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) announced June 17 that parties would receive government financing for their candidates. Without indicating an amount, the CEP promised that candidates would receive more than the 100,000 gourdes (USD 2,500) the government paid them two days before the April 19 first round. Embassy believes that money received this late in the game will hardly influence the final days of the campaign.

Some Violence

13. (SBU) Supporters of Lespwa and OPL clashed in Jacmel June 10, leaving one bystander dead of a gunshot wound. Local leaders of the two parties met on June 17 in Jacmel in the company of CEP counselor Ginette Cherubin and hammered out an agreement to pursue the campaign peacefully. A June 8 confrontation in Verrette (Artibonite Department between supporters of independent candidate Michelet Louis and disqualified Lespwa candidate Paul Andre Garconnet saw an exchange of gunfire that left one person dead. Only two of the four Artibonite Senate candidates responded to a CEP invitation to meeting to discuss preserving the peace. Several persons were injured in Chalon in the Nippe Department June 14 when supporters of the two Senate candidates clashed using firearms and machetes.

Security Precautions

14. (SBU) A Haitian National Police (HNP) spokesman on June 17 announced special security measures for election day. In contrast to the first round of the election, private and public transport will be allowed, but no vehicles without a CEP-issued laissez-passer will be allowed closer than 200 meters to voting centers. Motorcycle traffic will be banned in the national capital area. The HNP suspended all gun permits, and banned alcoholic beverage sales and demonstrations on election day. The HNP announced that it and MINUSTAH were deploying units throughout the country to ensure election day security.

15. (C) A CEP source said that Haitian National Police Director General Mario Andresol told Prime Minister Michele Pierre-Louis and CEP representatives in a recent meeting on election security that his forces were already stretched thin

PORT AU PR 00000589 002.2 OF 003

and could not cover all problem areas. MINUSTAH Election Assistance Office head Marc Plum (protect throughout) told PolOff June 17 that MINUSTAH likely will be more visible on election day and that the new Force Commander, Brazilian General Floriano Peixoto Viera Neto, has asked his troops to take a more active security role on election day.

Fanmis Lavalas Still in Boycott Mode

16. (SBU) The Fanmi Lavalas Party is continuing its election boycott policy. It has hardened its boycott slogan, replacing the "closed door" expression used for the April 19 voting with a "door nailed shut" for the runoff. However, FL leaders have not publicly campaigned for the boycott in the week before election day. RSO reports that leaflets have appeared in Port au Prince warning voters to stay home, or the streets would "turn red." On June 18, the CEP sent a letter to the Port-au-Prince chief prosecutor calling for an investigation of a Lavalas militant who the CEP claims is openly calling for an election boycott. The letter denounced Lavalas supporters for distributing leaflets during the June 18 funeral in Port-au-Prince for Aristide-confidante Father Jean-Juste (septel) warning voters to stay home or else risk being killed.

Election Authority Continues to Muddle Through

17. (SBU) Haiti's Electoral Authority (CEP) continues to struggle with election organization. CEP and MINUSTAH representatives are trying to address complaints by election center supervisors, guards and poll workers that they have not been paid for work on April 19. Some of these workers are threatening not to show for work on June 21. UNDP Governance Advisor Pierre-Antoine Archange told PolOff June 18 that over 90 percent of the more than 35,000 election personnel hired to staff first-round elections polling stations had been paid, and that MINUSTAH is working with a major bank to pay the rest.

Ballot Materials Arrive, with Few Exceptions

18. (C) Representatives of the CEP, UNDP and IFES report that most sensitive and non-sensitive ballot materials has arrived in the regions. Student demonstrations have hampered delivery of voting material to some areas of Port-au-Prince. MINUSTAH has recommended that the CEP relocate 15 voting centers in the Port-au-Prince area due to threats from student demonstrators, but the CEP thus far has moved only two. MINUSTAH's Marc Plum expressed exasperation at what he called the ''CEP's general ineptitude'' and difficulties he has encountered trying to organize logistics for the second round run-offs.

Political Leadership Remains Silent

19. (SBU) The President and Prime Minister did nothing to encourage citizens to vote in the first round, and they have continued that pattern since then. Not a single government leader has stressed the importance of citizen participation in the election. A CEP source said the election authority had encouraged the Prime Minister to speak out in public to encourage a larger turnout, but she has thus far not responded. CEP Member Ginnette Cherubin told key donors and political party representatives at a meeting June 9 that the CEP has increased its efforts to get out the vote. Radio and television spots and press conferences announcing the election date continue, as do special efforts to reach out to women and youth. Embosffs note that this effort is less noticeable than during the run-up to the first round. Some sources predict that voter turnout will be only marginally higher than in the previous round. As one CEP official told PolOff, ''Even with all that we have done to reach people, the public is tuned in to Presidential elections because that

PORT AU PR 00000589 003.2 OF 003

is when it counts.
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